

I am here today to draw attention to two major areas of transition that need to be addressed:

- The dissemination of information
- Equitable transition supports for all students

My transition journey began at the start of my daughter's junior year at Newtown High School, the fall of 2013. At that time, I knew nothing about transition and how it differed from special education. I assumed the school's Special Ed Department would have a comprehensive resource library addressing this issue and my case manager would be my "go to" person with all questions and concerns.

I quickly learned my assumptions were incorrect. This was not based on the incompetency of any individuals or groups, but rather, a lack of streamlined information available to educators and parents outlining transition educational, vocational and social support options. The State of CT does provide documents such as "Building a Bridge" and "Connecticut Transition Services in College, University and Community Based Settings" which are very helpful. However, they are of little value if parents and educators don't know of their existence.

Much of what I've learned about transition was the result of attending workshops and seminars sponsored by ASRC.

The State of CT must do a better job of streamlining all transition information from both public and private institutions and make it readily available on the Bureau of Special Education website. Furthermore, funding needs to be provided to develop a transition training program for all CT high schools to educate and inform teachers and staff. Issues to be addressed in this training would include:

- Coordination of the special ed, guidance and career development departments and its impact on how this improves support for special ed/special needs students.
- Developing meaningful and practical IEP transition goals and objectives. Executive functioning skills are critical to successful transition and should be automatically included in the student's IEP starting freshman year.

Transition programming is a critical resource for special ed/special needs individuals. While it is the responsibility of individual school districts to provide transition support to those students eligible to age 21, this environment creates wide gaps in the services provided and may not be appropriate for all students. The result can be support which may be "program driven" rather than "student driven."

In order to provide sustainable and cost effective transition supports and services for all eligible students, a more efficient format would be to have regional transition hubs. These transition hubs would provide appropriate social and vocational support and training for all students, based on the needs of the student, rather than available programs. Furthermore, these hubs would also have relationships with local community colleges and technical institutes (such as Porter & Chester) to provide access to post-secondary education with specialized academic support for those students

wishing to continue their education. A model is the Step Forward Program at Gateway Community College. These hubs would be financially supported by both school districts and the State of CT.

I am grateful for the programs and supports currently provided to CT special ed/special needs high school students and strongly encourage the State of CT to support the efforts put forth by our high school special ed departments by addressing the issues I've outlined and consider the suggested recommendations.

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